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THE EUROPEAN REVOLT AGAINST WHITE SLAVERY.

THIS tract is intended to give the means of forming an idea of the awakening of conscience which has recently taken place in Europe with regard to the immorality, injustice, and cruelty of state regulation of prostitution, and of the uprising of the people against the system. Shocking to all modest and pure minds as are the words prostitute, brothel, and procurer, an additional element of repugnance is given to them when they are prefixed by the word licensed. The wickedness of men and women is elevated into an institution when the state bestows a license for its commission; and this is done in some form or other in every country in Europe. The development of the system being affected by the tone of society and by the standard of morals, it is different in different countries. England and Germany will not allow the evil in an unmitigated form; concessions are made to public feeling for the purpose of disarming or of avoiding possible hostility. In Italy there is a repulsive symmetry in the social evil. It is systematized, and all concerned in it have their place in the legal arrangements which have been made to secure wicked men from the physical consequences of sensuality. The procurer and the prostitute are licensed for their "industry," and the brothel for its orgies. To this extent the Teutonic nations have not yet dared to advance. While licensing the "strange woman," they refuse a license to "the doors of her house"; as if it were worse to acknowledge the setting apart of a place than a per-

son for a wrong purpose. In England the strength and activity of the opposition to the system, under any form and in any measure of application, are so great that prostitutes are licensed in only eighteen districts of England and Ireland, and even there the licenses are not permitted to be carried about and shown as they are in other countries. The law permits it, but the authorities who have the working of the law break it in this point, in order to avoid public scandal as much as possible.

Here it may be well to point out the cardinal principle which underlies this system wherever it is found—it is the principle that the sin of sensuality is a necessity. Sometimes the advocates of the system say as much openly, and attempt a defence of their assertion; sometimes they conceal it under plausible phraseology, designating the sin an "inevitability"; at other times they assume with quiet indifference that a thing which has been will continue to be, and that it is best to regulate the conditions under which it shall exist, thus handing the human family over to the tyranny of every wrong which can show a sufficiently ancient pedigree. The principle is a denial of the righteousness of the divine Word, which forbids impurity to men and women alike under all conditions; it is equally a denial of the sufficiency of that strength from God by which evil in ourselves may be overcome. Even apart from Christianity, it is an assumption of the dominion of the body over the mind which not a few unbelievers in revelation would repudiate with warm indignation.

Wherever this principle is embodied in law, the nation which adopts it becomes a partaker in vice by complicity and confederacy.

The system so founded becomes an untold curse to men, boys, and youths, by placing an alluring temptation in their way. It becomes an equal curse to poor and friendless women by the oppression and cruelty by which the working of it is marked in all countries where it has a footing. Worse than

that, it degrades woman into an animal. Where it comes, she is woman no longer, but only a female.

One of its medical upholders urges that all women who are within its grip should be made to forget home, father, mother, brother, sister, heaven, God! Born of impurity, it never fails to breed and foster cruelty, injustice, and fraud; it has a history precisely like that of the slavery of the negro. In European cities women are as shamefully abused and wronged as ever was any negro on a plantation of the Southern States of America.

Thanks be to God, many men and women have taken alarm at this state of things; they have seen that the so-called sanitary measure, passed ostensibly for the protection of the people and the good of unborn infants, really means the elevation of prostitution into a recognized and regulated trade for the benefit of wicked men, and the committal of the prostitute herself into the hands of policemen and doctors, who are armed with exceptional powers to oppress her and retain her in a life of shame. They have also seen what is endangered and what is lost by such an arrangement. Lost! Public morals are sacrificed; women are represented as being only ministers to the worst passions of men. Endangered! Home-life, with its sweet associations of infancy, and its holy joys and sorrows of manhood and womanhood, will become an ever rarer thing in the land; and the beauty of youth, both in young men and maidens, will too often be withered by the scorching heat of this infernal temptation.

Not only so—the health of the people, which is ever the plea advanced in behalf of this kind of legislation, is not improved by these sanitary measures. After a ten years' experiment in England for the good of soldiers and sailors, all that can be shown is the following result, as stated by the Right Hon. James Stansfeld, M.P.: "First of all, as to the efficiency of the army, you have had the poor saving of fifty men out of the home army of eighty-five thousand men; secondly, the

permanent invaliding from these causes has increased; and, lastly, with regard to the navy, it has gone to the bad in every respect." * Places which have had stringent medical and police control five times longer than England are no better off than that country. Berlin is proof that facilities for breaking the moral law are not safeguards of the laws of health. According to a pamphlet on "Public Immorality in the Large Cities of North Germany," which was laid before the North German Parliament in 1869, in support of a petition for the adoption of more stringent measures against prostitution, and which is quoted by Dr. Simon, Medical Adviser to the Privy Council of Great Britain and Ireland, himself at one time a resident in Berlin for six years, and an observer of the working of this hygienic measure, it appears that in one year—1867—prostitutes under medical control had increased 45.4 per cent., while those not under such control had increased 15 per cent.; and the number of the latter was more than eight times the number of the former—12,491 as against 1,447. "In 1866 the police arrested 15,982 persons; in 1868, 23,681 persons—48.2 per cent. increase. In 1866, 1,445 females were sent to the hospital for such diseases, among them 35 servants; in 1867, 1,592 females, among them 88 servants. In 1866, 7,291 cases of syphilis came to the knowledge of the authorities; in 1867, 7,709 cases—an increase of 5.7 per cent. It is suspected, and not without reason, that there are thousands of others who are either occasional or regular prostitutes, but who manage to escape the notice of the police." This pamphlet shows that a similar state of things exists in Magdeburg, Breslau, Danzig, Königsberg, Cologne, Kiel, and Hamburg.

Englishmen and Englishwomen have not only taken alarm at the introduction into their country of a system which openly avows that it has nothing to do with morality, and which as a sanitary measure is a huge failure, but have also banded them-

* "Substance of the speeches of the Right Hon. James Stansfeld, M.P., on the Contagious Diseases Acts," p. 15.

selves together to abolish it in England and in every land where it has a home. They have covered their own country with associations. Leaving no way of influencing public opinion untried, there is a *National Association* and a *Ladies' National Association.* There are societies for working sections of the country—Northern, Midland, and Southern; there are societies founded upon an ecclesiastical basis which seek to move certain denominations of the church; and there is also an association of medical men. Their question has been carried into Parliament again and again; and on the last occasion—viz., June, 1875—*three* to *two* of the Liberals voted that the present obnoxious laws should be totally repealed. This indicates a great change of opinion among politicians of that party; for it was the Liberals who introduced the laws. At present, therefore, these laws in England stand by the influence of the Conservatives, though many Conservatives are strongly opposed to them.

In 1874, it was felt that, as England was not alone in her degradation, so she ought not to be alone in her attempt to arise from it. A mission was therefore undertaken by Mrs. Josephine Butler, of Liverpool, to Italy, Switzerland, and France, for the purpose of seeing what could be done to enlist these countries in the holy crusade against impurity and oppression. An account of Mrs. Butler's work and of the effects which are following upon it has just been published under the title of "THE NEW Abolitionists," from which the following facts are taken:

Joseph Nathan, who is the chief promoter of abolition in Italy, thus describes the slavery of the unfortunate women who are registered for their life of shame, also the feeling of the people about it, and their resolve to bring it to an end. He says: "Any girl who wishes to abandon a life of shame and sin is here (in Italy) perfectly incapable of doing so, even were she to make the effort of emigrating from one extremity of Italy to the other; for the police would be at once made cognizant of the fact, and would immediately subject her (in ac-

cordance with the regulations) to the sanitary obligations, wherever she might be, thus virtually obliging her to give up all hope of being able to follow an honest calling. So many instances of this have come under our notice since you woke us to a new life that we can scarcely number them. When we began by publishing one such case in the *Emancipazione* of June 12, 1875, which we thought at that time was almost exceptional, we were greeted with an almost universal exclamation of 'Why, that is nothing new; there is not a man in Italy of a certain age who could not produce a similar instance from his own personal experience!' and I must confess (to the everlasting shame of the disreputable slave system be it spoken!) I scarcely ever do find a man who cannot recollect a similar fact coming at one time or other under his notice.

"You know the names of the members of our Central Italian Committee, therefore I need not tell you that we justly exercise a certain amount of influence over the tone in which our subject has been treated. It will perhaps have struck you as a proof of this, that *ridicule*, which is ever foremost in Italy in attacking those questions which it is convenient to suffocate, has never dared to turn its arms against our committee or our cause; and I cannot help feeling that this proof alone is sufficient to determine the fact that Italy was not only ripe for the idea you brought among us, but that that idea will be applied here logically, thoroughly, and in all its bearings, however much it may clash with past ideas and institutions. I do not, of course, deny that we owe a very great deal of the popularity which our cause has now undoubtedly acquired in Italy to its having found ardent supporters in Garibaldi, Musio, Quadrio, Saffi, Cairoli, Petroni, and many other truly illustrious names; nor were the aristocracy slow in coming forward when they saw that we were backed by men like the Prince Francesco Pallavicini, etc. What has really pleased me is to see that so many professors of universities have sent in their adhesion, and some also undertook to collect signatures amongst the

young men who came to their lectures. . . . I do not think I could name a single town in Italy in which we have not at present some one working for our cause; and what above all else is encouraging, and moreover gives us certainty of success, is that *the working-classes, of whatever shade or colour of political opinion, have made our question theirs, and are determined to uphold it on every occasion, and with every means in their power.** . . . Nor can we say we are dissatisfied with the press. It has—with a few rare exceptions, and those mostly official papers—loyally opened to us its columns, while a very large proportion of the newspapers is favourable to our views.

"A great many ladies have now entered the lists, and in them we have found powerful allies." Since this was written, a Ladies' National Association for Italy has been formed.

In Switzerland the change of opinion was beginning to take place even before Mrs. Butler's arrival. This is shown by the proclamation of the municipal authorities of Zurich, who, in June, 1874, abolished the Maisons de Tolérance in the town of Zurich. The proclamation reads as follows:

"Toleration gives rise to a fatal confusion of ideas; men become accustomed to regard all that passes in houses thus protected as a permitted thing, and the young thus lose all the ideas of good conduct which have been inculcated to them.

"A moral confusion no less fatal is produced among the employees and agents employed in the *morals* police; the fact of being in constant relations with the tenants of bad houses

* Workingmen's wives and daughters are in danger of great oppression from this system. Not only will their rightful liberty to move about in American cities be practically taken from them by it, but they will run the risk of outrage at the hands of the policeman and the doctor. Rev. D. G. Watt, M.A., of Maidstone, an English town under the regulation system, bears the following testimony: "Another effect produced by this law is, that it is not felt quite safe by our wives and daughters to be seen in the streets at night. A teacher tells me that there are those who would willingly come to his classes at night, but they are afraid of being seen out regularly. If a young man and young woman went home together, a detective might very likely be upon them."—*Report of Public Meeting, London, May, 1875, S. Morley, M P., Chairman.*

necessarily leads to a species of intimacy. Moreover, it is not possible that they should display much energy against unlicensed prostitution while they are occupied in favouring regulated prostitution. This police is placed in a false position; it can only truly maintain a repressive attitude towards prostitution by showing itself frankly hostile to it in all its forms.

"To admit any sort of compromise with a trade fundamentally evil, to tolerate one description of houses of debauchery and make war upon others, is to enter upon the path of half-measures, compromise, and equivocal partiality, fruitless of every good result.

"Zurich owes it to herself to watch over the interests of the young confided to her care. To facilitate the approaches and multiply the opportunities of vice, is to offer temptation to the numerous students of the Polytechnic School and University, to our own citizens, and to the youth of the Canton gathered together in Zürich, whether in our barracks, or in our military, Federal, or Cantonal schools.

"The snare is all the more dangerous because presented under a false semblance of sanitary immunity. *The opinion that tolerated houses are a preservative against contagious diseases is refuted by modern statistics, and supported at present only by a minority of opinion among the faculty, and by the tenacity of inveterate prejudice.*

"Whatever advantage may be drawn from tolerated houses in respect of prophylactic measures against contagion, can never counterbalance their injurious effect, both immediate and indirect, for it is a recognized fact that the existence of these establishments tends to foster and develop sensuality and to multiply the means of gratifying it, while the abolition of such places facilitates in an equal degree every effort towards the abolition of prostitution. This is shown by the result of experience in the city of Frankfort-on-the-Main, and by the moral and sanitary condition of that town as compared with Hamburg.

"Moreover, if prostitution, like other vices, be indestructible; if the action of the police cannot be brought to bear except in cases of public scandal, well-founded complaint, solicitation, *procuring*, etc., etc., how much more reason, then, is there to take action against institutions which, while offering further indulgence to the habitual profligate, are at the same time hot-beds of prostitution and nurseries of every description of crime and abuse punished by the laws protective of public morality. In a word, the system of official tolerance of prostitution is irreconcilable with the idea of the state as a moral power, with every sound principle of social economy, and is regarded with just reprobation by the conscience of the immense majority of the people."

The battle with despotism and immorality is fought in France under circumstances peculiarly difficult and discouraging, and this fact lends additional weight to the earnest resolve of M. Ed. de Préssensé, of Paris, given in his own words of August, 1875: "Being a member of the Committee of the National Assembly which was charged with the revision of the penitentiary laws, I visited in this capacity the prison of St. Lazare, which is the very stronghold of the legislation which you oppose, and the most frightful centre of moral corruption. We are firmly resolved not to leave one stone of it standing. The very day before that on which I received your esteemed letter, we were holding a preparatory meeting in Paris to lay the foundation of a Committee which should associate itself with your work, and I was charged to communicate to you and to Mr. Butler, in its name, all our sympathy, and our sincere wish to pass on from deliberation to action; for we are convinced that what is at present done with the professed aim of restraining the tide of prostitution in Paris, tends only to render it the more irresistible. The regulation of prostitution does not diminish it any more than governmental roulette-tables diminish gambling; not to speak of the frightful responsibility which is assumed by a government which sullies the law by such an application of it."

Germany is only just beginning to feel the influence of this new question (strange that a wrong so old should only now create a "cause," a "question"), which, when once raised, gives hearts and consciences no rest till they espouse it in an honest consecration. The following letter, which was written to acknowledge the receipt of a pamphlet sent by Mrs. Butler to the Crown-Princess of Prussia—the Princess-Royal of England—will show how one heart has been touched. It is here given along with a few words in which it was originally made public by Mrs. Butler herself:

"THE PALACE, POTSDAM, BERLIN.

"Her Imperial Highness the Crown-Princess desires me to thank you earnestly for your letter, and to tell you that it has afforded her the deepest interest and pleasure to read your pamphlet. Her Imperial Highness hopes you will write to her frequently, whenever you have anything of importance touching so interesting a subject. She trusts that you will not fail to send her any work you may publish upon a subject which her Imperial Highness, like yourself, takes so deeply to heart. Her Imperial Highness the Crown-Princess desires me to express a hope that you are well, and how much pleasure it gives her to hear of your welfare. Yours truly,

"G. DE PERPIGNA.

"Mrs. Butler said she had so strong a sense of the equality of all human beings, that she did not value an opinion on this subject from an Imperial Princess any more than one from the poorest working-woman, or the most suffering slave of this state-protected tyranny pining in a prison for the crime of rebelling against the slavery, and remembering still that she was a woman. She only quoted the Princess's letter because it was the letter of a kind, true woman, and she thought that it would cheer them to feel that women of all ranks and classes were beginning to combine and link hand to hand for the defence of the weak, for the redressing of a great wrong, and for

a happier future. It had been well said that there is an absolute solidarity—a oneness—among womankind. The foul wrong had fallen, not on a mere section, but on all women—they were all insulted, and they all suffered—'Inasmuch as they have done it unto one of the least of these, they have done it unto me,' *and you.*"

America is the only civilized country where this slavery does not at present exist, but America has often been threatened with its introduction, and is threatened now. As far back as 1868 an attempt was made to pass an act legalizing prostitution in New York State, but it failed. The same, or a similar act, was presented to the Legislature in 1871, and *passed with very little discussion;* but apparently through some informality it never got into operation. A third attempt to carry a law of this kind in this State in now in 1876 being made, whether to fail or to succeed remains to be seen. In 1870 the city charter of St. Louis was altered so as to admit of the regulation of prostitution; the plan had full scope for three years, at the end of which time it was abolished as being contrary to constitutional law; but rumour says that the same ends are surreptitiously attained by bye means—that is to say, that there are illegal and improper methods adopted to give security for the commission of sin. About the same time as St. Louis was subjected to the regulation system, an attempt was made to subject Chicago, which ended in failure. The District of Columbia also was twice tried, and with a similar result; but as the enemies of morality, liberty, and health are not soon wearied, they are again in 1876 renewing their efforts to win that ground. In 1874, the Hon. A. L. Cressler introduced a bill into the House of Representatives of Pennsylvania to legalize prostitution, and was defeated. There is reason, therefore, to fear that in an evil day this great nation may admit within the pale of its constitution a system which will bring slavery and degradation in its train.

But whence comes the danger? What is the agency which so repeatedly forces this question to the front? Who are the

men who, beaten here and there, once, twice, thrice, yet rally to the fight? They attract little notice, neither do they want it. Their journals are not read by many but themselves. But among themselves what do they say? Let the *Medical Gazette* of August 13, 1870, published in New York, be witness. It says: "In all this, the sensual indulgence of a 'lusty youth,' there may be many *bodily traits* which are revolting to the less youthful and more refined mind; but as physiologists we utterly fail to perceive wherein the *soul* is involved. It is surely preposterous to assert that a natural act, which is perfectly right and proper if only a magistrate's form be complied with, becomes in itself sinful in the absence of that form" (p. 128). After speaking of other forms of excess besides fornication, this journal adds: "It seems to us that the only rational mode of averting such supplementary excesses lies in *regulating prostitution within its proper limits*, and pruning from it its dangerous outgrowths, both moral and physical" (p. 129). The words we have italicized show what such writers think, and are prepared to do. Let Americans, therefore, beware in time. England finds it hard to abolish the system in only a few districts. On the continent of Europe many noble men and women have abhorred it for years as an enemy of God and man, but it flourishes in spite of their tears and efforts, and in spite of the curses and groans of those who perish under its tyranny. Let Americans say plainly to doctors and politicians that it shall become neither a legal enactment nor a police regulation in any State or city of their Union. Now is the time, while the mischief is unformed, unlegalized, unadopted, only a thought and a purpose, to crush it out of existence.

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